

Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission



2009 Annual Report

Fiscal Year

July 1, 2008—June 30, 2009



STATE OF ILLINOIS

DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING COMMISSION

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PAT QUINN
GOVERNOR

JOHN MILLER
DIRECTOR

To Governor Quinn and the People of Illinois:

I am proud to present to you the 2009 Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission Annual Report. IDHHC works diligently to assure equality, respect, accessibility and independence for all individuals with a hearing loss. This year was especially rewarding as IDHHC received the award of Best Governmental Agency from Deaf Illinois.

Within this annual report, you'll learn about the partnerships IDHHC builds, not only within the deaf and hard of hearing communities, but also legislators, government agencies, service providers, organizations and private entities. In expanding its outreach efforts, IDHHC now broadcasts its meetings live on the internet. Most importantly, the broadcast are fully accessible having both sign language interpreters clearly visible and live captioning.

Additionally, IDHHC continues to actively administer the Interpreter Licensure laws in Illinois. The number of licensed interpreters continues to grow. Plus, IDHHC is seeing a trend that interpreters are actively pursuing to increase their skill levels since the start of licensure.

On behalf of Illinois' one million deaf and hard of hearing citizens, I thank you for your strong support of the Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission. I encourage you to visit IDHHC's website at <http://www.idhhc.state.il.us> to learn more about its activities.

Respectfully submitted,

John Miller
Director



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VISION STATEMENT

All Illinois residents with a hearing loss will enjoy the benefits of a fully accessible society enabling each person to participate in and contribute to all aspects of life.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission, as an executive agency of the state, shall advance the interests of all Illinois citizens with a hearing loss by advocating for systemic improvements, promoting cooperation and coordination among entities serving people who are deaf and hard of hearing, and disseminating information to eliminate negative stereotypes surrounding hearing loss.

VALUE STATEMENT

Assuring Equality, Respect, Accessibility and Independence for All Individuals with a Hearing Loss.

About IDHHC....

Established in 1997, IDHHC is a coordinating and advocating body that acts on behalf of the interests of people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Additionally, IDHHC regulates sign language interpreters throughout the State.

Authority

IDHHC was created by statute under the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission Act, 20 ILCS 3932.

Licensure was established by the Interpreter for the Deaf Licensure Act of 2007, 442 ILCS .

Structure

Eleven (11) volunteer Commissioners are appointed by the Governor for three (3) year terms. A minimum of six (6) members must be deaf or hard of hearing. The Commission has quarterly meetings which are open to the public.

The Interpreter Licensure Board is made up of a seven (7) board members which are appointed by the Director of IDHHC. The Board is composed of four (4) interpreters, three (3) deaf or hard of hearing consumers and the IDHHC Interpreter Coordinator. The Licensure Board advises IDHHC in establishing guidelines for policies and procedures related to Interpreter Licensure.



IDHHC's office is located in Springfield, Illinois and consists of seven (7) staff: Director, Assistant Director, Personnel Manager, Legal Counsel, Executive Secretary, Program Coordinator and Project Coordinator.

BEST GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY



IDHHC proudly accepted the honor of being voted Best Governmental Agency by Deaf Illinois. Deaf Illinois is an email bulletin providing new and events associated with the deaf community. Deaf Illinois has over 3,000 subscribers including individuals with hearing loss, interpreters, parents of deaf children, or anyone with an interest in the deaf community.

IDHHC Programs

IDHHC serves as a voice and monitors issues involving the deaf and hard of hearing community throughout the State of Illinois. This is accomplished by a variety of different programs available to the public. In addition to IDHHC legislative and interpreter licensure programs, IDHHC provides daily assistance to consumers and service providers. Below highlights just a few of those areas:

- Information and Referral
 - ✓ Exhibit booths
 - ✓ Lending Library
 - ✓ Informational calls
- Evaluation and Monitoring Outside Programs
 - ✓ Participation on Boards & Committees
 - ✓ Program review to identify & remove communication barriers
- Training and Technical Assistance
 - ✓ Presentations
 - ✓ Advocacy letters to service providers to understanding legal obligation to provide communication access.



IDHHC Programs



IDHHC attends a variety of different forums, including:

- Deaf Latino Awareness
- 2009 Illinois Association for the Deaf Conference
- Adult Role Model Education for the Deaf:
 - Whiney Young HS
 - Hersey HS
 - Springman Middle School
 - Thorton Fractional South HS
 - Nathan Hale School
 - Sandbridge School
- Illinois Academy of Audiology Conference
- Illinois Cochlear Implant Meeting
- Illinois School for the Deaf - TOPS
- Lions Statewide Meeting
- South of I80 Parent Conference
- 2009 Illinois Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf
- Deaf Nation Expo
- Deaf Awareness Day
- Early Hearing Detection & Intervention Day
- University of Illinois at Springfield—Deaf Culture Awareness
- John A. Logan Interpreter Preparation Program Advisory Board
- DHS-DRS Ad Hoc Hard of Hearing Transition Meeting
- North of I80 Parent Conference
- Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities Legislative Reception
- Statewide Deaf Service Coordinators Deafest
- South of I70 Parent Conference
- Illinois Newborn Hearing Screening Collaborative
- Statewide Independent Living Council of Illinois
- Support Service People
- State of Illinois Communications Conference by IL Law Enforcement
- Association of Late Deafened Adults Conference
- Broadband Deployment Council
- CHOICES for Parents
- Deaf Social Service Providers Meetings
- Illinois Association for the Deaf Advisory Council
- Illinois School for the Deaf Advisory Council
- Illinois Supervisors of Programs for the Hard of Hearing/Deaf Individuals
- Illinois Teachers of Hard of Hearing/Deaf Individuals Conference
- Illinois Legislative Research Unit Seminar for District Office Staff
- Interpreter Licensure Awareness Trainings
 - Champaign, Chicago, Belleville
 - Springfield, Dekalb, Rock Island
 - Crystal Lake, Schaumburg,
 - Naperville, and ISU—Urbana

Interpreter Community Comes Together



On May 29 & 30, 2009, IDHHC hosted its 4th Annual Conference. This was an excellent opportunity for interpreters both young and old to improve their skills or prepare for the National Interpreter Certification (NIC).

Participants came from throughout the State...this is what they had to say:

“Fun, lively & safe environment to learn and practice.”

“Great information that was well put together and researched.”

“... had me engaged from start to finish. Great Experience!”



“Very informative & Great Workshops!”



Interpreter Licensure

Starting January 1, 2009, sign language interpreters were required to be licensed in accordance with the Interpreters for the Deaf Licensure Act of 2007. By January 30, 2009, IDHHC had processed over 500 applications. The sign language interpreter license has a tiered leveling system: Master, Advanced, Intermediate and Provisional.

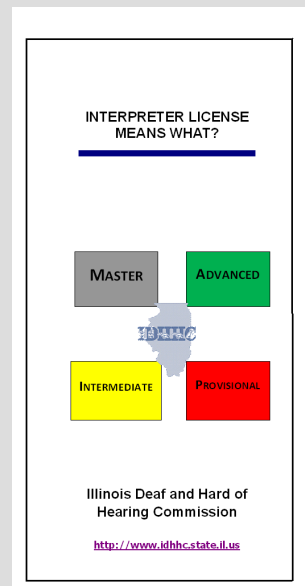
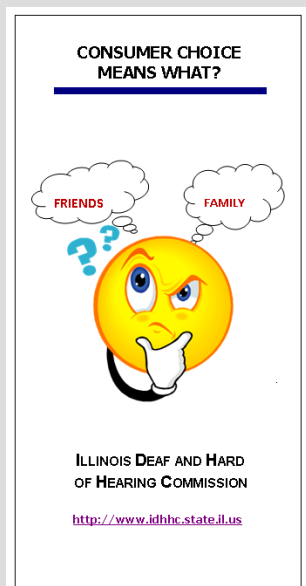
As of June 30, 2009, Illinois had a total of 603 licensed interpreters with the following proficiency levels:

Provisional—75
Intermediate—195
Advanced—143
Master—190

During the first 6 months of licensure, a total of nine (9) complaints were filed.

1—Closed for no jurisdiction;
2—Settlement Agreements; and
7—under investigation.

IDHHC's publications are available to be downloaded at
www.idhhc.state.il.us/brochure_faqs.htm



Legislation



IDHHC actively monitors legislation that impacts the deaf and hard of hearing community. IDHHC provides information to legislators as well as provides testimony in committee hearings when needed.

- Senate Bill 68 / House Bill 4043 requires hearing aids as a mandated coverage in health insurance. The average hearing aid costs per ear is \$1,182—\$ 2,876 and should be replaced every four to six years. Approximately seventy (70%) percent of consumer requiring two devices (one for each ear). IDHHC receives hundreds of calls each year seeking information on financial assistance available in buying hearing aids. While the bills were referred back to committee, several parties including IDHHC continues to work together in hopes of reaching a bill which will go to the floor which will help address the needs the Community.
- House Bill 725 recognizes American Sign Language (ASL) classes for purposes of foreign language requirements. School boards are encouraged to implement ASL classes as part of its foreign language curriculum. In turn, public universities and colleges can include ASL classes to satisfy the requirement of two (2) years foreign language for admission and award academic credit for the successful completion of any ASL course to be applied towards the satisfaction of the foreign language requirements of the University.
- House Bill 72 prohibits drivers from using cell phones, PDA's or portable computer for the purpose of composing, reading or sending electronic mail, a text message, an instant message, or to access an Internet site.



Initiatives for FY10

- ◆ Increase consumer advocacy efforts by sending more educational letters to service providers detailing legal obligations to provide communication access.
- ◆ Develop and implement a knowledge test for interpreters who are deaf, increasing opportunities to acquire interpreter license in Illinois.
- ◆ Expand opportunities and provide more continuing education opportunities for all interpreters including educational and deaf interpreters.
- ◆ Increase awareness of training and technical assistance available to both public and private entities to ensure communication barriers are removed and effective communication is provided.
- ◆ Develop an assessment tool for public entities to help them evaluate their services by understanding hearing loss and to identify areas where communication barriers exist and how to remove them.



12th Annual Statewide Deaf Finger-Spelling Bee

The Statewide Deaf Finger-Spelling Bee allows deaf and hard of hearing students to compete amongst their peers, similar to hearing spelling bees. The difference is that after the word is announced, the student is provided a “sign” for the word from their teacher and then spells the word to the judges using the alphabet in American Sign Language.

This event is open to any 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grader with a hearing loss, including students who utilize Cochlear Implants and/or hearing aids. Students are given over 500 words to prepare for the event. Students work with their teacher and classmates to learn the signs and spelling of the words.

The following schools participated in this year’s Bee: Charleston Middle School, Cissna Park Junior High, Holy Trinity School for the Deaf, Illinois School for the Deaf, Nathan Hale Middle School, and Wallace Grade School.



Statewide Deaf Finger-Spelling Bee



Group A Finalists

Nancy Kelly-Jones, the Master of Ceremonies, congratulates the Competitors on being the 5th and 6th grade finalists and applauds them for their hard work.



Group A Awards

Group A: 5th and 6th Graders

Group B: 7th and 8th Graders



Group B Awards

5 Year Strategic Plan

July 1, 2009– June 30, 2014

PREAMBLE: The following goals are intended to improve communication access for the deaf and hard of hearing community & promote hearing loss awareness.

GOAL # 1: To empower deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind individuals and families to advocate for themselves, by providing targeted materials that address advocacy issues and hearing loss awareness.

Objective 1:

By June 30, 2014, IDHHC will develop training materials in three (3) different subject matters for consumers to download from IDHHC website.

Objective 2:

By June 30, 2014, IDHHC will provide a minimum of fifty (50) trainings and/or workshops statewide to consumers focusing on rights of deaf and hard of hearing consumers.

GOAL # 2: To enhance the Commission's visibility and the resources available to the constituents of Illinois.

Objective 1:

By June 30, 2014, IDHHC will identify various population groups which are not familiar with IDHHC or the effects of hearing loss. IDHHC will develop five (5) educational materials to distribute along with IDHHC promotional items to increase awareness of IDHHC and various methods of communication access.

Objective 2:

By June 30, 2014, IDHHC will develop five (5) interactive materials on IDHHC's website which will engage "visitors" and provide educational information regarding IDHHC's Mission Statement.

Objective 3:

By June 30, 2014, IDHHC will increase interaction with local deaf and hard of hearing community groups and organizations by attending fifty (50) events and/or meetings.

GOAL # 3: To identify and decrease the barriers to communication access.

Objective 1:

By June 30, 2014, IDHHC will continue to develop working partnerships with at least five (5) entities essential in providing services to individuals with hearing loss. Through these partnerships, IDHHC will identify communication access barriers and implement statewide solutions.

Objective 2:

By June 30, 2014, IDHHC will develop "train the trainer" materials in five (5) different subject matters for groups that provide direct services to deaf and hard of hearing. These trainings will enable them to provide training to consumers and service providers within their community.

Objective 3:

By June 30, 2014, IDHHC will develop ten (10) specialized outreach materials for service providers educating on the legal responsibilities to provide communication access. Additionally, the materials will provide resources and information on how to arrange interpreters, CART, or other auxiliary aids.

Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission

Commissioners

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Dennis O'Brien, Jr.
Wheaton

Vice Chairperson

Tina Childress
Urbana

Nancy Abbott
Albion

Tamara Hogue
Jacksonville

Benro Ogunyipe
Calumet City

Joseph Culpepper
Bloomington

Hershel Jackson
Rock Island

Lisa Sesko
Lake in the Hills

Emma Danielson
Springfield

Mindy Joy Mayer
Wheeling

Marc Siegel
Buffalo Grove

Interpreter Licensure Board

Chairperson

Dana Craig
Chenoa

Vice Chairperson

Teri Hedding
Lombard

Secretary

Karen Janssen
Lombard

Somone Bowman
Hazel Crest

Shelley Engstrom-Kestel
Manhattan

Becki Combs
Alton

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Patty Greene, Personnel Manager
Tonia Bogener, Legal Counsel
Brandie Belford, Executive Secretary
Mary O'Brian, Program Coordinator
Brandy Hayes, Project Coordinator



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